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ABSTRACT

A project was undertaken to develop the curriculum content for a unique career ladder multi-entry/multi-exit nursing program that would provide training for nurse aides, practical nurses, and registered nurses. The major objectives of the project were to conduct a review of the literature on curriculum materials presently in use, to develop 11 syllabi for the program, to provide instructional guidelines for each course in the program, to secure approval for the nursing curriculum content from the Washington State Boards for Practical and Registered Nursing, and to secure accreditation for the revised program from the National League of Nursing. During the project, the entire nursing faculty at Lower Columbia College in Longview, Washington, took part in content research and course development work that resulted in a program that allows students to move from functioning as a nurse aide to practical nursing, and on to functioning as a registered nurse. The program, which is now being implemented at Lower Columbia College, has received the approval of the Washington State Boards for Practical and Registered Nursing and is recommended as an approach to nursing education that provides students with increased flexibility and satisfaction in their pursuit of careers in nursing. (MN)

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DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR A UNIQUE CAREER LADDER MULTI-ENTRY/MUTLI-EXIT NURSING PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

Project No. 83-APH(158)NB

Curriculum Development Project
Conducted Under Public Law 94-482

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RESEARCH COORDINATING UNIT
Washington State Commission for Vocational Education

FINAL REPORT

Project No. RFP 82-CC-126

DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR A UNIQUE CAREER LADDER MULTI-ENTRY/ MULTI-EXIT NURSING PROGRAM

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The project reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant from the Research Coordinating Unit of the Washington State Commission for Vocational Education. Contractors undertaking such projects under the Commission for Vocational Education sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Commission for Vocational Education position or policy.

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December 1983

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Summary of the Report

A. This is the final report of the Nursing Curriculum Development Project which began in October 1982 and was completed in November 1983.

B. The major objective of this project was to develop the curriculum content for an unique career ladder multi-entry/multi-exit Nursing Program by July 15, 1983.

Sub-objectives included:

1. To conduct a review of the literature for curriculum materials presently being used.
2. To develop eleven syllabi, one for each course planned in Lower Columbia College's career ladder multi-entry/multi-exit Nursing program.
3. To develop a course syllabus for each course with all of the details relating to that course.
4. To provide instructional guidelines for each course.
5. To secure approval for the Nursing curriculum content from the Washington State Boards for Practical and Registered Nursing.
6. To secure accreditation for the revised program from the National League of Nursing.

C. Methodology

The project director assumed responsibility for the total coordination of the project. As principal investigator, she ordered the Eric search for the review of the literature. The literature search was disappointing as although there was evidence that career programs in Nursing utilized the career mobility concept, there was little reference to multi-entry/multi-exit mechanisms. The publications of the National League of Nursing was probably the most helpful. Notter and Robey in their NLN publication stated that the educational approach for Nursing curriculums be designed to "accommodate the changing career goals and learning needs of the students. It facilitates entry into and exit from education programs by capitalizing on the students relevant education and experiences." (1) Kelley also speaks to this in her proposals for facilitating career mobility in Nursing

education. (2)

(1) Notter, L & Robey, M., Guidelines for Implementation of Open Curriculum Practices in Nursing Education, NLN Publications, 1978.

(2) Kelley, J., Proposed Strategies for Facilitating Career Mobility in Nursing Education, Florida Nurse, April 1980.

At the completion of the research, the total nursing faculty developed a conceptual framework and philosophy upon which to develop the program. At this time, the faculty also agreed to the method for multi-entry/multi-exit approach.

The development of each course followed with each faculty member given alternate periods of release time to allow for content research and course development. Each member was responsible for the content in the area of their expertise. The courses were developed in the sequence of order providing for leveling in the program which was one of our goals. Students progressing through the program will move from functioning as a nurse aide, to practical nurse to registered nurse.

D. The result of the project was the development of a three level Nursing Program. This program is now being implemented at Lower Columbia College.

E. The written report of the project was fairly easy as in each course, the faculty attempted to follow the same format. The biggest problem encountered was the proportion of material to be accomplished to the amount of release time allowed. When each faculty member was released to write, the workload had to be adjusted to keep the ongoing program in motion without loss of continuity for the student. Because of this problem, the project was not completed by July 15, as originally planned but ended on November 1, 1983. There was a period of interruption between summer and fall quarter when nothing occurred due to faculty vacation time.

F. Conclusions:

The faculty believe that the effort and time required to accomplish this task have been very beneficial to the Nursing Program at Lower Columbia College. The development has made the program more cohesive and has provided the opportunity for the faculty to identify the important elements of the curriculum. The faculty recommend this approach to Nursing education to any program wishing to give their students more flexibility and satisfaction in their educational pursuits in Nursing.

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Development of the Project

A. Statement of the Problem

There are various approaches to the development of Nursing curriculum. A state and national trend is to develop Nursing curricula utilizing the career ladder concept. The career ladder concept advocates the building of educational levels to facilitate the student's progression from one level to the next without penalizing from previous learning. According to Notter and Robey. this educational approach is desinged to "accommodate the changing career goals and learning needs of students. It facilitates entry into and exit from education programs by capitalizing on the students relevant education and experience."

As one of the leaders in Nursing education, Lower Columbia College's Nursing ladder program will provide a method for students to progress through any or all of the three levels of preparation -- the nurse aide, practical nursing or registered nursing. The student may enter at the beginning nurse aide level and progress to the last or R.N. level, or if qualified enter at the beginning of the second (PN) or third (RN) level.

To allow more flexibility in the admission process, applicants will be allowed entry on a quarterly basis. This quarterly admission will make the program more accessible, especially when some students returning to school may have preprequisites to complete before qualified to enter the program.

Notter, L. & Robey, M., Guidelines for Implementation of Open Curriculum Practices in Nursing Education, NLN Publications, 1978.

The multi-entry component reflects the ability to begin according to the individual's career goal and in the time frame most suitable to the achievement of that goal. The multi-exit feature is the ability to leave the program after the first quarter with a marketable skill to work and/or to return to the next level in the program at a later time.

To provide this type of Nursing education, a new curriculum must be developed. Designing a career ladder curriculum is not simply taking the existing program for each identified level of preparation and placing one after the other. The curriculum must be designed to produce students who are competent at the end of each level to allow them, if they desire, to function at that specific level. It also must provide the opportunity for them to build on their already acquired knowledge to complete the additional requirements for the next leve. This would seem to indicate that the curriculum will need to be planned very carefully with the competencies of each level identified as well as the commonalities required of each level.

A limited literature and program search have not produced an already developed curriculu. Most of the literature refers to methods for the development of career ladder programs but does not provide a curriculum outline.

A study of all the program in Washington and Oregon, including those with career ladders, revealed that the most commonly used approach is a commercially prepared program called LEGS (learning experience guides for nursing students). Although LEGS was not primarily developed for the ladder approach, most schools have modified this self directed approach to meet their particular situation. It was also discovered that faculty working with the approach either have positive or very negative feelings about the system. In addition, employers of graduates from the system seem to have the same positive and negative feelings.

Lower Columbia College's present Nursing program has had an excellent record of success as demonstrated by positive evaluations from employers of our graduates and by consistenlty high averages on the Stage Board examination scores. Since we have

been successful, we are not interested in changing to a system which might not meet the same standards. We are interested in an approach that would develop the curriculum around a theoretical framework emphasizing the nursing process and the satisfaction of human basic needs. We believe a core curriculum could be developed around this framework and be consistent with the philosophy of career laddering, emphasizing the multi-entry/multi-exit components.

The development of this type of curriculum could serve as a model or a guide for other programs. It would provide an alternative to the LEGS program. To this end, we approached our task to develop a unique career ladder multi-entry/multi-exit career program.

LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE NURSING CURRICULUM

Prerequisites

Course	Description	Credits
PSYCH 111	General Psychology	5
ENG 101	English Composition	3-5
Elective	Humanity or Math	5

Level I - Nurse Aide

Course	Description	Credits	Quarter
ZOO 121	Human Anatomy & Physiology	5	1
PSYCH 205	Developmental Psychology	5	
* NURS 100	Introduction	1	
* NURS 101	Fundamentals of Nursing	8	

* Can be taken without prerequisites but cannot proceed in Nursing Program without taking all prerequisites.

Level II - Practical Nurse

Course	Description	Credits	Quarter
ZOO 122	Human Anatomy & Physiology	5	2
CHEM 111	General Chemistry	5	
NURS 102	Basic Med-Surg Nursing I	11	
MICRO 257	General Microbiology	5	3
NURS 103	Basic Med-Surg Nursing II	11	
NURS 110	Vocational Adjustments	1	
NURS 104	Basic Family Centered Nursing	10	4
SOC101	Introductory Sociology	5	

Level III - Registered Nurse (ADN)

Course	Description		
NURS 211	Advanced Med-Surg Nursing I	13	5
NURS 212	Mother and Newborn Nursing	7	6
NURS 213	Mental Health Nursing	7	
NURS 220	Legal Aspects of Nursing	1	
NURS 214	Advanced Medical Surgical Nsg.	13	7
NURS 230	Professional Strategies	1	

Intent of the Project

The objective of the project was to develop the curriculum content for a unique career ladder Nursing Program which would feature a multi-entry/multi-exit component. The career ladder was to reflect three levels of preparation -- the nurse aide, the practical nurse and the associate degree nurse. The practical nurse and associate degree nurse would be prepared to take the exam for LPN and RN licensure.

Development of the Project

The curriculum has been designed to facilitate the students development in a progressive order. Each level would increase in complexity. This progression would utilize each quarter completed as the basis for the subsequent quarter. A search of the literature revealed that the career ladder approach to nursing education did indeed utilize the building of knowledge in a progressive order from one level to the next, but there was no curricular plan identified that all of the faculty could embrace.

A. Levels of Nursing in Career Ladder Programs

The program was developed to allow students progression through any or all of the three levels of preparation, beginning with the nurse aide (Level I) and leading to Level III or RN level. If qualified, the student could enter at the beginning of the second (PN) or third (RN) level.

The following curriculum overview designates the courses and the three levels of preparation.

B. Multi-Entry Component

To increase flexibility in the admission process, twenty applicants will be allowed entry into the program on a quarterly basis. Quarterly admission should be more acceptable to those students completing prerequisites early.

In the past, there has been a fairly high attrition rate (25-43%). One possible contributing factor was the lack of adequate preparation initially, thus we have developed a prerequisite quarter. Admission testing in math, reading and English has been instituted. Another factor contributing to the attrition probably related to the large size of the classes (seventy) admitted once a year. The size decreased the opportunity for student/teacher interaction and probably led to increased student stress and dissatisfaction.

The admission of twenty students fall, winter, and spring quarter will make classes smaller and will allow entry at more than one time per year. Once the program is fully implemented, the anticipated enrollment should range between 160 and 180 students. This is outlined on the accompanying chart.

In addition to attempting to decrease the attrition rate, we plan to try to replace students who leave by instituting an admission procedure which allows students to be accepted at advanced standing so enrollment in each class will be stable. We have developed competency theory and clinical tests to measure proficiency at the first and second level to enable certified nurse aides or LPN's to demonstrate their proficiency and enter the program at the beginning of the next appropriate level. In this manner, we hope to keep enrollment at the maximum 20 number.

		FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
IMPLEMENTING YEAR		20	20	20	20
			20 A	20 A	20 A
				20 B	20 B
YEAR I		20	20	20	
		20 A	20 A	20 A	20 A
		20 B	20 B	20 B	20 B
		20 C	20 C	20 C	20 C
			20 D	20 D	20 D
				20 E	20 E
YEAR II		20 B			
		20 C	20 C	20 C	
		20 D	20 D	20 D	20 D
		20 E	20 E	20 E	20 E
TOTALS		160	160	180	140

Enrollment figures per quarter and year.

Each letter denotes a class as it is followed through to completion. The totals indicate the number of students that should be enrolled once the program is fully implemented and if there is total retention of students.

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C. Multi-Exit Component

It was the belief of the Nursing faculty that students terminating their education before reaching a projected goal should have a marketable skill. In an attempt to facilitate this belief, the first quarter was designed to contain all of the nurse aide skills and when the course was completed, the student would qualify as a certified nurse aide. Anyone leaving the program after that quarter would, at least, have those skills. If the student left the program any time after the fourth quarter, the student would be eligible to write the Practical Nurse Licensure Examination.

Having the multi-entry and exit policies should allow students to drop if needed and return without a penalty.

D. Conceptual framework

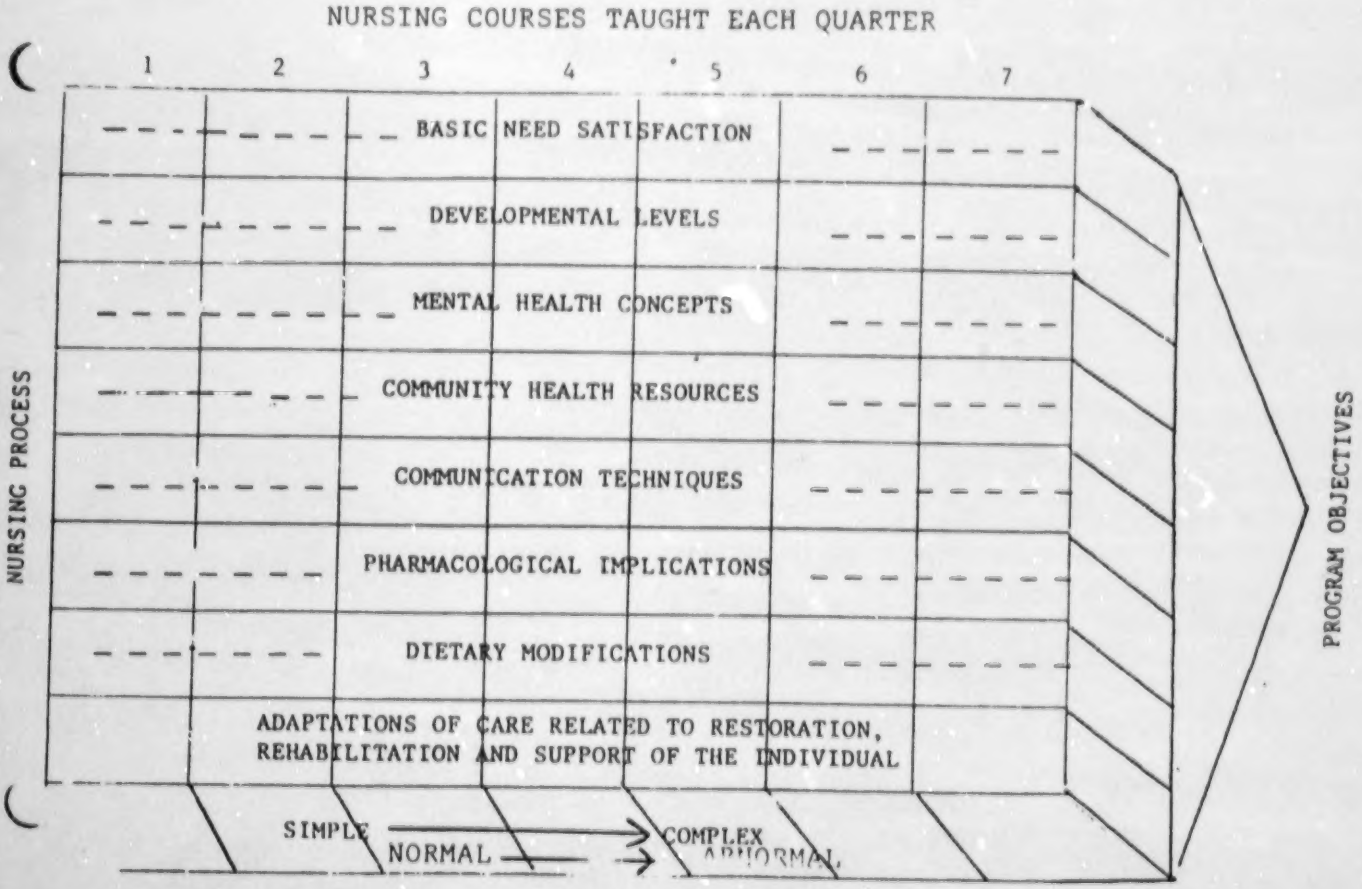
In the development of the conceptual framework, consideration was given to the Washington Administrative Code Rules and Regulations for Nursing and/or Nursing Assistant programs and the established Lower Columbia College Nursing philosophy. It was our belief that the conceptual framework should provide a sound educational base for student experience. The conceptual framework was developed around key concepts delineated in the program philosophy.

The nursing curriculum evolves from the key concepts reflecting the nursing process. Integrating threads of knowledge woven throughout each course include satisfaction of basic human needs at various developmental levels, mental health concepts, community health resources and rehabilitation, communication technics, dietary modifications, and pharmacological implications and adaptations of care related to restoration, rehabilitation and/or supporting the individual.

The use of concepts, scientific and nursing principles will be essential to this curriculum. Concepts are defined as being mental images; an abstract idea. Key concepts are basic central ideas being essential and from which other concepts (sub-concepts)

might be extracted. Key concepts are used with the intent that these concepts could be related to different concepts expanding their meaning or generalized to similar situations. The statement of the relationship between two or more concepts is known as a principle. We define the principles then as generally being known as knowledge.

The following schematic drawing represents the development of the nursing process through the total seven quarters. Concepts of the nursing process are the building blocks on which the total curriculum evolves. The threads of knowledge are shown as interwoven through each nursing course. We also believe that there are educational practices which must be instituted throughout the program to make it sound, such as proceeding from simple to complex, normal to abnormal, etc. (Please refer to the statements in the Philosophy.)



Evaluation of the Project

The evaluation of the project has occurred as both an on-going and terminal process.

1. The Principal Investigator in consultation with each faculty member writing course material, evaluated each course in relation to the course's importance, the course content, and how it related to the total curriculum.

2. The project was not totally completed by July 18, 1983 as planned. The first year's courses were completed, allowing the beginning implementation of those as we finished writing the courses for the second year.

3. The total Nursing faculty, in consultation with the Nursing Advisory Committee, assessed the quality and the appropriateness of the content as the curriculum writing evolved. There was a thorough evaluation of the total project when it was completed.

4. The Washington State Boards of Registered and Practical Nursing both approved and commended the approach and the method of instruction. Both programs were granted approval for implementation of the curriculum.

5. The Nursing faculty are writing an indepth self-study report in anticipation of the National League of Nursing Accreditation site visit, scheduled for April, 1984. That will be the last formal evaluative measure to be taken, however, the evaluation process will continue as long as the program is implemented.

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